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26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Surrey student satellite stars

10 October 2024



Meet DARWIN – the award-winning, small satellite that could detect and track wildfires, built by students from the University of Surrey.

Surrey's Peryton Space team has won the prestigious UK Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (UKSEDS) satellite design competition, beating teams from around the country for the second year in a row.

DARWIN – also known as Detection, Analysis and Research for Wildfire Investigation Network – is just 10cm x 10cm x 30cm.

Team leader Mya White, who recently finished the second year of her BEng degree in Aerospace Engineering and who has started a year-long industry placement, said:

"We used a thermal camera to detect heat spots and an optical camera to determine distance so that we could calibrate th e temperature readings. We also wrote software to split the area we monitored into a grid so we could pinpoint exactly wh ere the simulated fires were."

Peryton Space also enjoyed success at other UKSEDS competitions.

They won the In-Orbit Servicing and Manufacturing competition, which gives students experience in mission design, engineering, business development, and other industry-relevant skills.

Peryton students came second at the competitive Mach-24 rocketry competition, where their high-powered rocket reached an altitude of 2.5km, Peryton's highest rocket launch to date. It successfully launched and deployed the CanSat built by the team.

Away from UKSEDS, Peryton Space also won an award for the best presentation at the Race2Space National Propulsion competition, which challenges students to design, manufacture and test rocket engines.

Harvey Nixon, who leads the research and development branch of Peryton Space and who is studying for an MSc in Space Engineering at Surrey, said:

"We are delighted with our 2024 results and really proud of the team at the University of Surrey's Peryton Space. On our team, there are students of all backgrounds and disciplines, which ensures we have a range of expertise, and our members get invaluable experience ready for careers in the space sector.

"Some members of Peryton Space are working on the Jovian-1 satellite project here at the University of Surrey. This involves collaborating with industry professionals and students from partnering universities and applying the skills learnt from Peryton Space to working on a space-bound project."

Secret 100 acres just north of Epsom and Ewell

10 October 2024



Despite being home to ancient hedgerows, a locally significant population of brown hairstreak butterflies, and a small fragment of wetland, the series of seven meadows spanning 42 hectares (about 100 acres) at Tolworth Court Farm is far from reaching its ecological potential.

Citizen Zoo is working with Kingston Council and The Community Brain to change that! Our shared vision is to establish a dynamic, mixed-mosaic nature reserve that nurtures a more diverse and abundant wildlife population. We will restore and enhance the site's ecological

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ISSN 2753-2771

balance while honouring its rich farming heritage through innovative rewilding measures inspired by rural projects such as mixed grazing regimes.

Mixed-Grazing Scheme

Despite its size and location along the green corridor of the Hogsmill, the site is underperforming in terms of the wildlife it supports. After 20 years of annual hay cuts that should increase botanical diversity, the site's plant communities have degraded since the last surveys were conducted in 2003. Additionally, while the 1000+ insects and 40+ bird species recorded sounds an impressive number, this is far below what a site of this should support. Indeed, a few decades back the site was home to nationally rare ground-nesting birds such as skylarks and lapwing, plus increasingly scarce bullfinches.

Adopting the mixed grazing methods of successful rewilding projects in rural areas, such as Knepp and Wild Ken Hill, we are currently preparing the site for the re-introduction of livestock!

We will be introducing a small number of cattle and pigs, which through their varied grazing behaviours, will improve plant diversity, aerate the soil, and create a diversity of habitats. This will create a dynamic ecosystem within Kingston's largest nature reserve helping to restore ecological balance and create a healthier ecosystem for local species and people. With the invaluable support of our dedicated volunteers and local students, we are clearing vegetation around the perimeter of the site, and preparing to install a secure livestock fence. Once in place, the cattle will be free to roam within the designated area. Each individual will be fitted with a GPS tag, allowing us to monitor their movements and make adjustments if needed, ensuring their welfare and the protection of the environment.

We are aware of the vital importance of the site in terms of local people's access to green space as well as its popularity among dog walkers. However, with the presence of cattle, it will be increasingly important to keep dogs on leads. We will be using Sussex cattle, which will have received training around the presence of humans and dogs, and also be individually selected for their docile traits. This is a common breed for grazing in urban areas and means we can be confident of no issues arising, however, as with other projects, we will ask dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads within the enclosure as an extra precaution.

We are recruiting a dedicated team of 'Wild Guardians' to conduct checks on the livestock and their welfare every day. If there are any issues flagged with the individuals or regarding their safety on site we will respond immediately. Do get in touch if you would like to be a part of this group. It will be a wonderful opportunity to get hands-on experience with a traditional breed, and we would love to have you on board!

Wetland Restoration Project

Another key feature of the Wild Tolworth project is the restoration of a large wetland area in the Great Meadow. Historically, the Hogsmill River flowed through the western corner of Tolworth Court Farm Fields, which acted as a floodplain for the site stream The river was straightened around the 1950s to reduce flooding in the area. This was a commonly used method of flood reduction that counterintuitively passed the risk of flooding on further downstream, as the water flows quicker from A to B. While we would like to have re-diverted the river back through the site, due to electrical, sewage, and gas utilities on site, this was not possible. Instead, we will mimic the flow of the river with an enhanced closed-system wetland. By restoring this important feature, we will rejuvenate the ecological balance of the area, providing vital new habitats for local wildlife while also reconnecting the site with its historical roots. This will increase the presence of many bird species and amphibians on site. Additionally, by storing surface runoff and slowing water entering the river, the wetland will help to prevent flooding downstream. We will increase the accessibility of the site with a wheelchair-friendly boardwalk over the wetland, offering everyone the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of Tolworth Court Farm and experience this unique habitat up close.

This restoration project required us to gain planning permission from the council (as shown by the green planning notice signs at the entrances to the site). There will be no buildings constructed on site.

Work to Date

This project has been a long time in the making. Citizen Zoo, alongside Kingston Council and the Community Brain, has coordinated comprehensive ecological surveying including engaging with nationally recognised invertebrate experts and botanists. Further to this work, in conjunction with the Field Studies Council and Biological Recording Company, we have run over 10 Community Field Recorders Days, where volunteers can learn from species experts to help survey the site and learn more about the incredible species that can be found within the reserve. This has provided insight into the biodiversity of Tolworth Court Farm and informed the changes that can be made to improve the health of the ecosystem and bring benefits to wildlife and people.

We intend to begin work on our livestock fences and wetland restoration project in late 2024 to early 2025.

Nature-Friendly Dog Walks

Tolworth Court Farm is a cherished local space, and we want everyone to feel informed and

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ISSN 2753-2771

involved. If you have any questions regarding the logistics of these changes please come along to one of our Nature-Friendly Dog Walks on site. This provides a great opportunity to ask any questions you have while we show you the vision for the site. You can find more information on these on our website (citizenzoo.org) or our Eventbrite page!

Further Questions
If you are unable to make it to a dog walk but you have any questions regarding the logistics of these changes please see our website by googling ‘Citizen Zoo Wild Tolworth’ for some FAQs or email hello@citizenzoo.org.

Pia Trevelyan-Ashby

Surrey Cop demoted for racist texts

10 October 2024



A Surrey Police sergeant who shared racist texts and a video of a man attempting to take his own life has been stripped of his rank – but will continue on active front line duties.

Daniel Hebborn admitted to sending a series of Whatsapp messages to friends in 2019 and 2020 which included a video which showed a man attempting to take his own life by jumping from a high rise building. The video showed the male with “devastating injuries” on the floor, a police misconduct panel heard.

During the two-day police misconduct hearing this September, the former sergeant accepted the messages were inappropriate, breached of the standards of authority, respect and courtesy. The panel said his behaviour had the “obvious potential to cause serious harm to the reputational standing of the Surrey Police and national policing in general and undermine public confidence”.

The messages also included an image deemed an “inappropriate racist joke” showing a photo of an elderly black man with his arm around the shoulders of an elderly white man with the accompanying title ‘is this a mugging?. In a separate message, the officer was asked whether he “beat a guy like you did when you arrested him for littering” to which the officer responded “he was white”.

He also shared an image of an empty articulated lorry trailer with the heading “Trailer for sale, serious offers only, sleeps 39 people”, followed by “Guess my favourite restaurant will be short staffed again too”.

Hebborn continued to serve as a sergeant with Surrey Police in the years between sending the racist messages and the conduct hearing.

The report read: “There was some concern that the ‘banter’ contained in the WhatsApp messages may have extended beyond the private group and into his position as a sergeant and role model to those in his team or station. based on comments made in his own submitted character references including; “Dan’s sense of humour is best described as pushing boundaries that are deliberately controversial but always intended as a joke”.

The panel determined that the multiple breaches of the Standards as admitted, amounted to gross misconduct and were arguably so serious as to justify dismissal. However Hebborn avoided being sacked and was instead given a final warning and reduced to the rank of constable.

The report reads: “A clear message had to be given that where an officer behaved in a way demonstrated by the conduct in this case, such conduct was not tolerated within the police service. There was a strong need to build and maintain public trust in the police.”

The report added that action had to be taken in order to maintain public confidence and respect especially when it came to the police “tackling issues of racism within their forces.”

Head of professional standards, Chief Superintendent Andy Rundle, said; “Surrey Police expects a high level of professionalism from our officers and staff and we will take action when these standards are not met.

“The hearing heard that former PS Dan Hebborn had admitted to the offensive and inappropriate messages and shown significant remorse for his actions. Due to their historic, non-work-related nature, as well as his previous record of service, on this occasion the panel has determined that reducing his rank to PC is an appropriate course of action.

“This decision carries a financial impact as well as potentially impacting any transfer request and future career development. Surrey Police is committed to being an anti-racist organisation, where all forms of discrimination are entirely unacceptable. We place immense value on serving and protecting all our communities with fairness and respect

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ISSN 2753-2771

as well as ensuring those who work within our Force enjoy a sense of belonging and respect from their colleagues.

“Earlier this year, we shared our anti-racism statement across the organisation. Our expectation is that all officers, staff, and volunteers uphold the commitments outlined in this statement to challenge injustice and uphold anti-racist principles. We are developing training to deliver to officers and staff that will support the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to ensure respect for all in the service we deliver. In September, we began a series of training sessions that all leaders are required to attend which include a focus on race equality and guidance on how to ensure an inclusive team environment.”

Surrey Police ethics print on wall at Mount Browne HQ. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

Ashtead heroes recognised by local Rotary

10 October 2024



Ashtead ‘local heroes’ were recognised for their outstanding service to the community at last night’s 2024 Ashtead Rotary Community Awards.

Three awards were made, to people nominated by their peers, for outstanding services to the local community.

The **Individual Community Service award** was given to **Richard Garrard** who, in 2017 set up the Patient Participation Group with Ashlea Medical Practice. The Group was such a success that it won a national award in 2020. Richard is also Chair of Ashtead Good Neighbours, growing the Group to over 100 drivers who provide transport for medical appointments. He also led the Ashtead British Legion Poppy Appeal which raised £12,000 last year.

The **Group Service Award** went to the Trustees of **Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall** (APMH) whose centenary is being celebrated this year. The trustees and volunteers are committed to improving and maintaining the Hall which is an outstanding community facility for the Ashtead community.

The **Service above Self Community Award** was awarded posthumously to **John Woollatt**. John sadly passed away in May 2024. He was the Chair of the Trustees of Dyscover, a local charity for people suffering with aphasia, a complex language disability. John brought a business approach to Dyscover making it a progressive well-known local charity. He was also a very ‘hands on’ Chairman where no task was too big or too small.

Ashtead Rotary Club President Tony Webb said,

“The Charitable support that Ashtead Rotary Club receives from the local community through Ashtead Village Day, is immense. In large part this is down to individuals and organisations, such as those who we celebrate this evening, for the support they give to our local community.

“This evening, local community nominations have enabled us to go some small way to say a big ‘thank you’ to those who have undertaken such outstanding work. I would therefore like to pay tribute to them on behalf of Ashtead Rotary Club, and to all of those other volunteers in Ashtead who put in time and effort to help others in our local community”.

Art, culture, and science collide in Surrey

10 October 2024



This November, the **University of Surrey** will open its doors to the public as it hosts two prominent research festivals: the **Being Human Festival** and the ESRC Festival of Social Science. As part of the Being Human Festival, the UK’s only national festival dedicated to the humanities, Surrey will explore key themes related to identity, culture, and the human condition. This year’s festival features a number of intriguing events, including:

- Landmarking through Music: Early Recordings Revealed: Listen to early recordings as heard by your great-grandparents! Connect with early 20th century music through wax cylinders and develop an understanding of

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ISSN 2753-2771

their role within society at the time.

- Poetry Play! Performances and Workshops: Think you might be a poet? Do you love poetry? Or maybe you just don't get it. Are you puzzled or excited by the weird ways words work in poems? If you appreciate the power of language, we made this for you.

- Landmarking Surrey's Musical Heritage: Dame Ethel Smyth: Dame Ethel Smyth was a pioneering composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a prolific author of biographical writing about herself and others, a leading suffragette, and for the majority of her life a resident of the county of Surrey.

Running concurrently is the ESRC Festival of Social Science, which focuses on the real-world impact of social science research. This year's festival at Surrey tackles a wide range of urgent societal issues, including:

- Green Means Go? Tackling Surrey's climate emergency through deliberative democracy: Discover the latest sustainability-focused research and innovation initiatives being led by the University of Surrey.

- Bridging Digital Divides: Building dialogue on online safety between youth and parents: Discover what the evidence really says about young people's digital lives and the challenges of online safety, parenting and digital citizenship.

- The Role of AI in Modern Policing: Key topics will include risk assessment, facial recognition, robotics, data mining, and cybercrime detection, offering a deep dive into the current applications of AI in policing.

- Eco-Logic: How Can We Make Green Living Easy? Discover surprisingly simple strategies that transform your daily routine into a sustainable one, without sacrificing comfort or convenience.

Professor Annika Bautz, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences said:

"Both festivals are designed to be interactive, accessible, and thought-provoking. They offer attendees the chance to engage directly with cutting-edge research in ways that are relevant and relatable to all aspects of life. From workshops that let you create your own art or stories to expert panels exploring societal challenges, the festivals are an invitation to explore, question, and rethink the world around us.

"Whether you're passionate about the arts and humanities, curious about the social sciences, or simply looking to engage in meaningful conversations, these events offer something for everyone. The University of Surrey is proud to be a hub for these conversations, and we invite the public to participate in these exciting and enriching festivals."

Key dates:

- ESRC Festival of Social Science: 19 October – 9 November 2024

- Being Human Festival: 7–16 November 2024

For more information, a full list of topics and events, and to book your free tickets for any of the events, please visit: https://buytickets.at/universityofsurrey3

Epsom and Ewell's over 60s win multi-sports

10 October 2024



Wednesday 2 October saw the 16th running of the Better Club Games tournament at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Copper Box Arena.

The annual event put on by charitable social enterprise GLL for the over-60s, saw over 400 older people from 20 local teams descend on the 7,500 seat venue – the 4th largest event space in London.

The 'Battle of the Boroughs' pits contestants from London and the south east in a diverse range of activities – all in friendly competition.

Darts, dominoes, short tennis, short-mat bowls, swimming, badminton, table tennis, cycling, walking netball and walking

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football all featured – with 200 people taking part in the walking sports held the week before in the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre and 100 in timed swims in local clubs throughout September.

Across all sports and locations, 700 older people took part.

In a tightly fought contest, Team Epsom & Ewell took the ultimate overall title – ahead of Waltham Forest in 2nd and Greenwich in 3rd. Epsom & Ewell were also winners in 2023 in the first gathering of the Better Club Games since Covid.

GLL first decided to put on the Better Club Games back in 2006 when it realised there was no major multi-sports activity in the UK which brought older adults together annually in the spirit of fun competition.

Competitors are drawn from Active Ageing Clubs facilitated by GLL in leisure centres; the activities chime with GLL's mission to improve health and wellbeing as a key community service through physical activity and sport.

Active ageing has since become a major public health priority with noted benefits to physical health, mental health and helping reduce social isolation in the UK's older population. In addition, keeping active reduces the burden on the NHS.

The 2024 Better Club Games Ambassador was actor and radio presenter Christopher Biggins, 76. He added some trademark fun to the proceedings, taking part in a candid Q&A and trying his hand at darts and table tennis.

'Better' is the brand name of the UK's leading leisure charitable social enterprise GLL. The company's ethos is to reinvest in local community health and wellbeing and the Better Club Games is a key part of this commitment.

GLL Deputy CEO Phil Donnay said: "It was inspiring to see over 400 participants at the Copper Box Arena turn out to take part in this year's running of the Better Club Games, compete and have fun.

"The importance of ageing well and living well is huge – both for individuals and wider society.

"As a charitable social enterprise, GLL are proud to show what older people are capable of through our Better Club Games.

"Congratulations to all those who took part and to our worthy winners – Epsom & Ewell."

Speaking from winning team Epsom & Ewell, semi-retired accountant Tony Gayle, 68, from Stoneleigh, took part in the table tennis, the Games enabling him to rediscover his interest in the sport. "The competitive element is fun but the most important thing is to enjoy the day. It's sociable – you see people you met at the Games last year."

Epsom & Ewell Team mate Phil Humphrey, 64, is a retired construction consultant who was involved with building the Stratford Olympic Park. This was his fourth Club Games and though he previously competed in table tennis, he has now switched to short tennis. "I'd never tried it before but they needed someone for the team a couple of years ago," he explains. "Myself and my partner volunteered and we got to like it – so much so that we now play once or twice a week, all year round!"

Better Club Games is organised and funded exclusively by charitable social enterprise GLL – which runs the Olympic legacy competition venues Copper Box Arena and Lee Valley Hockey & Tennis Centre which hosted the sports.

In addition to transport and refreshments, participants enjoy raising awareness for their club, a celebrity ambassador on the day, a team trophy for each individual sport winner and a medal for every competitor.

Teams from Enfield, Mole Valley and Newham competed for the first time.

The event was supported by GLL supplier partners Technogym, Your PT and Brakes.

GLL Communications

Picture caption: 2024 Better Club Games Winners – Epsom & Ewell with GLL Deputy CEO Phil Donnay (4th from right, front row) and Club Games Ambassador Chris Biggins (second row, 4th from left) /Credit: GLL

More or less Surrey Police challenge to Commissioner

10 October 2024



Staffing cuts at Surrey Police could be in the pipeline as the force attempts to fill a potential £23.4 million financial hole.

Surrey Police has to make the savings in the next four years and both government-agreed pay increases for police officers and staff and inflation have added to the difficult financial position.

Recognising the financial pressures on forces, the government has awarded a special grant of £175m in 2024/25 to fund the 4.75% officer pay award. Out of money set aside to cover the pay increases, Surrey has been awarded just £2.1m to cover the costs.

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ISSN 2753-2771

As Surrey gets a smaller slice of government funding, calculated by a formula, there is less money to go around. The police allocation formula (PAF) is worked out through various data sources, including population density and the relative need for policing in areas. The nature of the formula grant system means the annual money allocated to Surrey covers just 45% of the total budget whereas other areas such as Northumbria get 80%.

In a Police and Crime Panel meeting on September 26, Surrey Police's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Kelvin Menon, said "it is too early to say" exactly the savings that will need to be made and where.

The CFO said it is likely the government's funding will only cover pay increases for Surrey's police officers so the force will have to bridge the £2.4m gap to cover the costs of police staff itself. Police staff may be cut as the force has to keep a base number of 2,253 police officers in place.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Richard Wilson (Bagshot and North Windlesham/ Liberal Democrat) said: Due to the government's penalty regime in place to ensure officer numbers are maintained, any reduction can only come from police staff. This means the people helping front-line officers in investigations and forensics."

The CFO told the panel that work was also being done into making savings by changing shift patterns, reducing overtime and forensics, looking at the benefits of upgrading administrative and data systems, potentially reducing vehicle numbers and a detailed budget review by area.

Modelling different scenarios, the CFO said Surrey Police might have to make up to £27.6m gap as a worst-case scenario, or £21.5m on an optimistic basis. Mr Menon added: "The Chief and the PCC are both committed to try and minimise any impact on residents."

If the savings cannot be reduced by the time the budget is set in February 2025, the CFO said Surrey Police will have to use some of its reserves.

Uncertain future for officer numbers

In a national drive to increase police officers, the previous government set Surrey Police an 'uplift' target of 2,253 officers and awarded £48k for every officer recruited above the baseline. Although the force recruited an additional 22 officers it now remains uncertain whether the £48k bonus will be received every year, accounting for the extra officers.

Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend, said: "If [the bonus] ceases to be the case then officer numbers will have to be reduced." She added the reduction would happen through "natural wastage", meaning officers leaving the force for a new job or change in career.

Surrey currently loses an average of 17 officers a month, creating overall a 10% vacancy in the force.

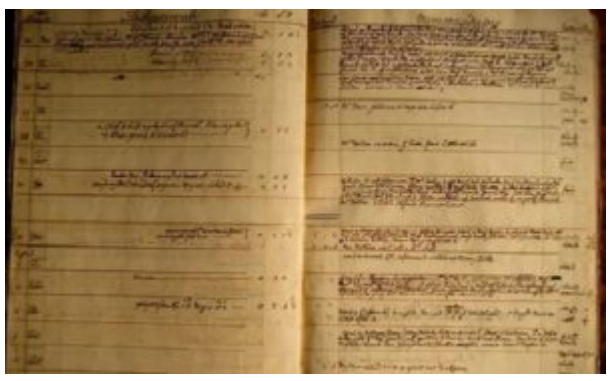
A gloomy atmosphere took over the meeting as the PCC repeated there was a lot of "uncertainty" in the new government's policy going forward so the force is unable to forecast officer numbers beyond 24/25. She said that constables have been told not to expect any more funding.

Cllr Wilson criticised Mrs Townsend during the meeting, stating the PCC ballot paper for her re-election had the description. More police, safer streets'. He asked: "Shouldn't voters take that as a commitment that the number of officers is going to increase?"

Mrs Townsend said the number of officers has increased and is still increasing, and argued it was for the Chief Constable to decide where officers and staff are best deployed. She added: Both the Chief Constable and I have both made commitments to ensure that we have more officers out and about on the streets."

American baseball started in Surrey

10 October 2024



The latest **BBC Secret Surrey podcast** features Julian Pooley, Public Services and Engagement Manager, who tells the story of a previously unknown William Bray diary. Covering 1754-1755, the diary was found in a garden shed in 2007. It is a fascinating document for many reasons but it is particularly interesting as it is the earliest known manuscript reference to baseball, confirming baseball was played in Surrey more than 20 years before American independence.

Listen here »

Read more from Surrey History Centre HERE.

Text and image courtesy Surrey History Centre

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Hampton’s Jolly Boatman has more to be jolly about

10 October 2024



Hampton Court and its historic views will be forever changed after the secretary of state approved controversial Jolly Boatman plans to build 97 homes together with an 84 bed hotel and restaurant on the banks of the River Thames.

The landmark ruling on the long-running saga was confirmed this week when Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published her formal decision on Friday, September 27.

The decision comes as welcome for developers who have been battling to regenerate the area around Hampton Court station but is a slap in the face to the campaigners who have fought for decades to stop it.

It comes at the end of a nine week consultation that ran between April and June this year in call for new evidence.

The majority of responses focused on the impact the huge development would have on Hampton Court Palace and surrounding area given its cultural status.

However, much of the evidence presented had already been considered during an earlier planning appeal when inspectors overturned Elmbridge Borough Council decision 2022 and green lit the development, Mrs Nandy said.

Instead the focus on the government’s decision related to changes in planning law and the listed statuses of Cigarette Island Park and the Coal Office – as well as arguments over maximum heights of buildings on railway land.

Issuing her decision, the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport said she gave “consent to build the residential-led mixed use scheme on land around Hampton Court Station, specifically the former Jolly Boatman and land adjoining Hampton Court Station, Hampton Court Way, the Western part of Cigarette Island, east of Jolly Boatman and Hampton Court Station site.”

She said that since the apeal, Elmbridge Borough Council’s supply of deliverable housing had declined, and failure to proceed with the site would be make the problem worse

The government also considered the council’s local heritage listing of the land opposite the palace was not a sufficient reason to not approve the development and plans.

The former Jolly Boatman site is next to the River Thames and overlooks the palace.

Elmbridge Borough Council rejected the original application which received more than 1,800 objections due to “excessive height and bulk” and “harm to numerous heritage assets”.

However, its decision was challenged and overturned after the planning inspector ruled it fit with surroundings while the hotel, retail units and riverside restaurant would improve the experience for those using the station to visit the palace.

The inspector added that the plans would also support the rest of the town.

Related reports:

Doubtful Henry VIII would have permitted

Local MP comes to our defence?

10 October 2024



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In a significant development in UK party politics, **Helen Maguire**, the Member of Parliament for Epsom & Ewell, has been appointed to the frontbenches of the Liberal Democrats. On September 19th, Liberal Democrat leader Sir **Ed Davey** announced that Maguire would take up the role of spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces. This announcement follows the unveiling of the Lib Dems new 33-member frontbench roster, following the party's success in July's general election, where they secured a record 72 parliamentary seats.

Maguire, a former Army captain in the Royal Military Police, brings extensive real-world experience to her new role. She served in Bosnia on a NATO peacekeeping mission and in Iraq, where she assisted the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force. Magiure took to X (formerly known as Twitter) to express her enthusiasm, stating that she is "delighted and honoured" to take on the role, while also highlighting the need for the UK defence budget to reflect the challenging times we face.

A party spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces plays a crucial role in communicating the party's stance on national security, military strategy, and defence spending. Helen Maguire is likely to become more prominent in debates on these issues in the House of Commons, especially in light of ongoing global conflicts and increasing geopolitical tensions.

In an era of emerging threats, the public will increasingly turn to the main political parties to ensure the military is effectively managed, underpinned by competent, transparent, and realistic governance. As global conflicts and tensions continue to rise, trust in the leadership and oversight of the armed forces will become a central issue in upcoming elections, with national security playing a critical role in shaping the public's confidence and the country's future stability.

Maguire faces a challenging task, especially as the Liberal Democrats work to rebuild public confidence. The party is likely to be cautious to avoid over-promising on policies, mindful of the damage caused when they reneged on their pledge to scrap tuition fees during their coalition government from 2010 to 2015, a decision that deeply hurt their voter base.

As the third-largest political party in the UK, the Liberal Democrats are attempting to position themselves for further growth. With Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer's approval rating dipping in recent Opinion polls and ongoing uncertainty surrounding the direction of the Conservative Party, the Lib Dems may believe that they are poised for future electoral gains. The political winds of British Politics are constantly shifting, and as Helen Maguire takes a substantial step forward into the spotlight, her performance on the frontbench might just determine if the Lib Dems can ride the wave of electoral success, or end up washed out to the fringes at the next general election.

Epsom's local life savers

10 October 2024



A Covid survivor who was so poorly her children were warned she wouldn't survive the night and the mum of a young boy who bravely battled leukaemia have thrown their support behind an inaugural event that celebrates incredible NHS staff.

Jan Ehtash, from Carshalton, spent 12 weeks in Epsom and St Helier hospitals after falling seriously ill with Covid – receiving care from a dedicated team of nurses, doctors, and other health professionals.

Sutton schoolboy Jackson Hall, meanwhile, was treated at St George's Hospital for leukaemia, where paediatric teams went "the extra mile" to support the now-seven-year-old and his family.

Both Jan and Jackson have finished treatment, and they and their families are calling on others to cast their nominations for the very first staff awards at St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group.

"They are amazing, just wonderful people," said Jan, 60. "All of the nurses, the doctors, the cleaners, they are just so, so caring.

"When I went into hospital, all I took with me was a handbag with a set of pyjamas, a toothbrush, and a pair of underwear. I had no idea I would be there that long, but quickly started to deteriorate and was told I would have to go into intensive care. I just remember turning to the doctor and saying, 'I don't want to die'.

"It's thanks to the staff at Epsom and St Helier that I am here today, and I cannot thank them enough for saving my life and for being there when my family and I needed them the most."

Sam Hall, Jackson's mum, added: "All the staff were incredible throughout Jackson's treatment and they really went the extra mile – from giving me a hug when I had to choose between staying at hospital or going home with my daughter, to making me a cup of tea. The care they provided was fantastic, but it was these small things, too, that made a difference.

"Jackson is doing amazingly, settling back into school and becoming an amazing big brother to three-month-old Louie. He makes us so proud.

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ISSN 2753-2771

“Sometimes as a patient or a family member it’s hard to know exactly how to show your gratitude to the incredible people who have been there in your time of need. But one way you can say thank you is by nominating a team or member of staff for this award.”

The Outstanding CARE Award is dedicated to staff and teams who have been nominated by a member of the public, while colleagues will put forward their nominations in several other categories. All 17,000 members of staff working for the hospitals Group – from frontline clinicians, to essential support teams – are eligible for nomination.

Jacqueline Totterdell, Group Chief Executive, said: “Our biggest-ever awards event will recognise the incredible teams and individuals who go above and beyond for patients like Jan and Jackson.

“Hearing stories about the amazing efforts our staff go to is one of my greatest joys, and every single day they make me proud. I’m already looking forward to reading all the nominations and celebrating everyone who is shortlisted.”

The awards take place on Tuesday 10 December at the Oval cricket ground, and will be generously supported by the hospital charities and local businesses. To make your nomination, visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/about/gesh-care-awards or www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/gesh-care-awards by Tuesday 22 October.

NHS Press

Image: Jan in ITU with family

Dorking refurb: “it’s behind you”!

10 October 2024



Dorking’s “sleeping beauty” will wake up in time for the busy panto season – it has been confirmed.

Dorking Halls closed in June 2024 for refurbishment work that could cost up to £11 million – with the initial focus on replacing the 1930s plaster ceiling in its grand hall as well as much needed mechanical and electrical work.

Mole Valley District Council this week confirmed work was on schedule and Dorking’s flagship theatre is on track to welcome the public through its doors from Monday, December 9.

Councillor Nick Wright, cabinet member for leisure and tourism said: “The pantomime is Sleeping Beauty and I like to think of Dorking Halls as a sleeping beauty that will wake up on December 9.”

With the first stage of work set for completion, the council cabinet agreed on Tuesday, September 24, to release the remaining £6.1m needed to complete phase 2, set to take place next summer.

Cllr Margaret Cooksey (Liberal Democrats; Dorking South), said: “It’s really exciting that we have a date.

“There is a program and everybody is going to be welcomed back into our favourite venue and it won’t be how we have been used to it.

It will take some time to get the hang of it, but it’s an exciting prospect.”

In addition to the new ceiling, guests will notice enlarged toilet provision, a draft lobby and new fire alarms.

Next year’s work will mostly consist of replacing electrical and mechanical installations that are near the end of their useful life.

The meeting heard that new seating, bigger bars and improved accessibility remained a pipe dream for the foreseeable future unless new revenue streams or grants are found.

Instead, the work has been to ensure Dorking Halls continues to meet health and safety standards, with improved visitor comfort and better energy efficiency “while meeting the changing technical requirements for future shows and events”.

Cllr Wright added: “Dorking Halls is a tremendously important part of Mole Valley’s community life.

“It not only serves as a key cultural and arts hub, but also provides opportunities for residents and visitors to gather and celebrate local, British and International talent.

“This beautiful art-deco building, which has served us for so many years, has reached a point where significant investment is needed to continue its community mission.

“I’m pleased that the proposed budget has been approved by Cabinet, and the important upgrades to the building can continue to move forward.”

Shows that had been scheduled to be held at Dorking Halls were shifted to Leatherhead Theatre, the Green Room Theatre and Pippbrook House.

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ISSN 2753-2771

Dorking Halls (image Google)

Epsom man pounds Epsom streets for charity

10 October 2024



Local man and charity CEO, **Lucas Mee**, ran 125km in under 24 hours this weekend, joined in part by local MP **Helen Maguire**, to help raise funds and awareness for children on the streets in Uganda. Starting at 3pm on Saturday 21 st September 2024, Lucas pounded the local pavements of Epsom and ran on a treadmill through the night. Lucas completed the 125km in 23 hours and 27 minutes.

On the morning of Sunday 22 nd September he met Epsom and Ewell's MP **Helen Maguire** and her running group, the Epsom and Ewell Harriers Athletic Club in Horton Country Park, to cross the 100km mark and share with them the reasons for his run.

Lucas is fundraising for S.A.L.V.E. International – the charity he is CEO of – which supports young people and their families in Jinja, Eastern Uganda, to leave the streets and have brighter futures through education, business empowerment and permaculture.

This epic run is part of a month-long fundraising campaign to help raise £10,000 for young people who live and work on the streets. Thanks to Lucas' fundraising efforts this total has now been beaten.

Lucas says, "Every day, children in Uganda leave their homes and families in search of a better life. They can travel vast distances to reach major cities, hoping for new opportunities, but often end up at the mercy of the street, where life is constantly dangerous.

"S.A.L.V.E. International works to provide immediate support to street connected children in Jinja, with the aim of helping them to return home and achieve their full potential.

"To raise awareness of the extreme decisions that children on the streets are forced to make, as well as raise vital funds for our work, I have decided to put my fitness to the test and take on this ambitious challenge.

"125km is the equivalent distance between Uganda's capital, Kampala, and Jinja where we are based. This is a journey that many children make by foot. I know it will be tough, but it's nothing compared to spending even one night on the street".

Lucas' challenge is part of S.A.L.V.E. International's Step up for S.A.L.V.E. campaign, which invites people across the globe to take on their own fitness challenge in September to help raise funds for children living and working on the streets of Uganda.

Another Epsom pub gets a major face-lift

10 October 2024



Much-loved Church Street pub, The Faraday, has reopened after an exciting six-figure investment, creating six new jobs in the local community.

Located in the town centre, the site was originally an eclectic showroom and was named after the experimental physicist

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ISSN 2753-2771

Michael Faraday. Today, The Faraday has become one of the most popular bars in Surrey.

As part of Stonegate Group's commitment to position every site for success, the investment has been carefully allocated to enhance the pub's offerings while preserving its unique charm.

All renovations have been carefully crafted to aid the pub's goal of being a welcoming space for sports teams, social societies and locals looking for an unforgettable night out.

The venue's attractive new décor has revitalised the space, creating a contemporary setting that's perfect for bottomless brunch on Saturdays.

The sports experience at the pub has been enhanced with the addition of multiple HD TV screens. Whether it's Premier League football, rugby, boxing, or Formula 1, The Faraday has it all covered.

With a huge 60-inch HD TV, and now a whopping 23 HD TVs throughout the site, every seat has a view of the sporting action.

The Faraday also has multiple dartboards for Epsom locals who want to find their inner Luke Littler.

The pub has a popular beer garden, where guests can enjoy soaking up the last of the autumn sun, with the front garden also providing a relaxing spot for a lovely cold pint of premium world lager.

A popular student hub, the pub is renowned for its student deals, with the best student night in the city, offering alcoholic drinks starting at just £2.35, burgers or pizza and a drink for a generous £8 and soft drinks starting at 65p.

The Epsom pub offers a fantastic range of craft beers, world beers, cider, and cocktails, all at some of the most competitive prices in the area. It's the perfect place to enjoy a drink in front of one of the many big screens, with 2-for-1 cocktails available all day, every day.

However, those not drinking alcohol will be able to choose from an extensive range of no and low alcohol options, ensuring everyone is accommodated to.

What's more, furry friends are welcome throughout the pub, with the venue being a popular spot for dog walkers popping in for a pint.

MiXR users can unlock exclusive rewards at The Faraday by downloading the MiXR app and creating an account, including a free drink for signing up. Students can also take advantage of special discounts available exclusively through the app.

Samantha Camara, General Manager of The Faraday, said: "These renovations align with Stonegate Group's commitment to always improve and innovate, meaning we can give our guests the best possible experience at our beloved pub.

"We want the investment to position our pub as the place to be for students as well as being the premiere venue to watch sport in Epsom with a huge range of big screens and food and drink at competitive prices.

"I've been General Manager of The Faraday for six years now and my love for this venue only continues to grow. This renovation marks a new chapter for our team which we cannot wait to start!"

The venue features a jam-packed weekly deals schedule, including 2-for-1 pizzas on Mondays, Student Baskets on Tuesdays, Wing Wednesdays, and Craft & Cocktails on Thursdays. Additionally, there are food and drink deals available throughout the week, along with the popular 2-for-1 cocktail offer.

But that's not all, the beloved bar always has a reason for guests to visit with karaoke night on Thursday and Friday, and Saturday nights seeing local DJs spinning decks late into the night.

Finishing the week in style, the pub hosts a quiz night on Sundays at 7pm, where locals are invited to test their knowledge amongst the smartest in Epsom to win exciting prizes.

Related reports:

Landmark pub re-assembles Tuesday

Surrey Coroner's bed safety concerns

10 October 2024



A frail, elderly man "cried for help for over an hour" before tragically dying after getting stuck in a gap between his care home bed extension, a Surrey coroner has found.

Paul Batchelor was found dead at The Red House, **Ashtead**, on 27 June 2023, after a mattress extension fell through his

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ISSN 2753-2771

bed's extension frame.

Assistant Coroner, **Susan Ridge**, raised concerns that Mr Bachelor's "numerous cries for help" were not responded to and there is a "lack of awareness" about bed extensions which could put other lives at risk.

A spokesperson for the care home said the circumstances around Mr Batchelor's death was "deeply distressing" and they "fully accept and respect" the assistant coroner's findings.

Ms Ridge found that despite one carer hearing Mr Batchelor's cries for help, she "did not open the door or go into his room as it was said she was frightened of him". Even as he called out for help for over an hour, between 10:05pm-11:15pm, much of the staff were doing their night-time routine.

Mr Batchelor, who was under respite care, was put into bed around 9pm by care home staff. Later that night he had manoeuvred himself to the foot of the bed and was lying on the mattress extension.

But because there was no deck in place supporting the extension, Mr Batchelor fell through the bed extension frame and became wedged in the gap.

Ms Ridge also addressed her report to the governmental Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) regarding a possible "lack of awareness" of the support needed for a mattress extension or bolster on extended beds.

She said: "Without adequate support there is a risk of death in that the mattress extension can fall through the bed frame creating a sufficient gap for a person to become wedged or stuck."

A Red House spokesperson said: "We strive to provide the highest level of personal care and support to all our residents." They added the company had addressed the concerns raised with equipment and staff protocols as a "matter of priority".

The member of staff no longer works for the company, the spokesperson said, stating the care home has "ensured that the wider team understands how best to manage challenging or stressful situations". They added: "We have underlined the importance of seeking support from others to sustain responsive and appropriate care, which is our highest priority."

Dr Danielle Middleton, Deputy Director in Benefit/Risk Evaluation at MHRA, said she is reviewing the report carefully. The government agency has 56 days to respond to the coroner's concerns.

Dr Middleton said the MHRA issued a National Patient Safety Alert, after reports of "adverse incidents" involving bed rails, medical beds, trolleys, bed rails, bed grab handles and lateral turning devices, warning of the risk of entrapment."

The Alert requires staff receive device training suitable to their roles. Organisations are also required to have an up-to-date medical device management system in place, with regular servicing and maintenance of medical devices in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

She added: "It also requires regular risk assessments for patients using bed rails or handles, including entrapment risks."

The prevention of future deaths report, issued on September 13, has also been sent to the interim chief executive of the Care Quality Commission and chairman of The Red House (Ashtead) Limited.

The Red House Care Home, Ashtead. (Credit: Google Street View)

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